

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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PLEASE PASS WH FOR MAXINE BURNS

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: OVIP
SUBJECT: BACKGROUND ON MEXICAN MEDIA

1. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HOLDS A MONOPOLY ON NEWS-
PRINT, CONTROLS THE LICENSING OF ALL RADIO AND
TELEVISION STATIONS, AND IS A DIRECT OR INDIRECT SOURCE
OF CAPITAL FINANCING FOR ALL MEDIA. THUS, IT IS IN
A POWERFUL POSITION TO INFLUENCE THE CONTENT, EDITORIAL
LINE AND TONE OF ALL MEDIA AND, IN SOME CASES, EVEN
THE HIRING AND FIRING OF KEY JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA
EXECUTIVES.

2. THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND ALL MAJOR
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS HAVE ACTIVE AND FORCEFUL
INFORMATION DEPARTMENTS. WHILE DENYING THE EXISTENCE
OF AN OFFICIAL CENSORSHIP AGENCY, THE OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARIAT OF GOBERNACION
(INTERIOR) CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZE MEDIA ACTIVITIES.
THIS CONSIDERABLE OFFICIAL PRESENCE IN RELATION TO THE
MEDIA HAS GIVEN RISE TO CONSIDERABLE "SELF-
CENSORSHIP," SPECIALLY OF ITEMS CONSIDERED DAMAGING
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TO MEXICO'S OR THE ADMINISTRATION'S PRESTIGE OR
SELF-IMAGE.

3. THE MEXICAN MEDIA DO NOT ALWAYS ADHERE TO THE
STANDARD JOURNALISTIC CONVENTIONS REGARDING "OFF THE
RECORD" OR "BACKGROUND" STATEMENTS. FURTHERMORE,
ONE IS LIKELY TO BE MISQUOTED OR TO HAVE ONE'S

PUBLIC COMMENTS REPORTED OUT OF CONTEXT OR PERSPECTIVE.
CASUAL, CONFIDENTIAL STATEMENTS MADE TO REPORTERS
AT RECEPTIONS OR CHANCE MEETINGS CAN APPEAR, AMPLY
DISTORTED, ON THE FRONT PAGES THE FOLLOWING DAY.

4. THE LARGE NUMBER OF MEDIA OUTLETS MAKE THE
JOURNALISTIC SCENE IN MEXICO FRANTICALLY COMPETITIVE,
AND THE LOW SALARIES PAID TO REPORTERS DO NOT TEND
TO ATTRACT THE MOST TALENTED PEOPLE, WITH NOTABLE
EXCEPTIONS.

5. A DETAILED OVERVIEW OF THE VARIOUS MEDIA
IN MEXICO WILL BE PROVIDED ON ARRIVAL. LUCEY

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Message Attributes

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